

Claims

I claim:

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1. A method of distributing back-up data in a network, comprising:
- providing a server system;
- coupling the server system to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to distributed devices; and
- utilizing the server system to distribute data back-up workloads across a plurality of the distributed devices.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises an internet or an intranet.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises a wireless network.
- 5 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the distributed devices comprise computer systems having excess file storage capacity.
- 20 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the back-up data workloads include redundant workloads so that any given portion of the back-up data is stored on at least two different computer systems.
6. The method of claim 3, further comprising identifying at least one workload capability for a plurality of the distributed devices and utilizing the identified at least one workload capability to schedule back-up data workloads for the distributed devices.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the utilizing step further comprises forming a resulting index stored on the server system.

5 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an incentive to couple the distributed devices to the server system through the network so that the distributed devices are capable of performing a portion of the data back-up workload.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the incentive comprises entries in a sweepstakes.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying at least one workload capability for a plurality of the distributed devices and utilizing the identified at least one workload capability to schedule data back-up workloads for the distributed devices.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the workload capability is excess file storage capacity.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the network is an intranet.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising transferring an agent to the distributed
20 devices, the agent being capable of managing the data back-up workload.

14. A distributed back-up/processing system, comprising:
a first system coupled to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to
distributed devices; and
a workload database coupled to the server system storing workloads for data back-up, the
first system scheduling the data back-up workloads for the distributed devices to
back-up data coupled to the network.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the network comprises an internet or an intranet.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein the network comprises a wireless network.

17. The system of claim 14, wherein the distributed devices comprise computer systems
having excess file storage capacity.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the back-up data workloads include redundant
workloads so that any given portion of the back-up data is stored on at least two different
computer systems.

19. The system of claim 14, further comprising a capabilities database coupled to the first
system storing workload capabilities for a plurality of the distributed devices, the first system
utilizing the workload capabilities to schedule data back-up workloads for the distributed
devices.

20. The system of claim 14, further comprising an incentive database coupled to the first system storing incentive values for a plurality of the distributed devices, the incentive values being provided to couple the distributed devices to the server system through the network so that the distributed devices are capable of performing a portion of the data back-up workload.

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21. The system of claim 20, wherein the incentive comprises entries in a sweepstakes.

22. The system of claim 20, further comprising a capabilities database coupled to the first system storing workload capabilities for a plurality of the distributed devices, the first system utilizing the workload capabilities to schedule data back-up workloads for the distributed devices.

23. The system of claim 10, wherein the network is an intranet.

24. The system of claim 14, further comprising transferring an agent to the distributed devices, the agent being capable of managing the data back-up workload.

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